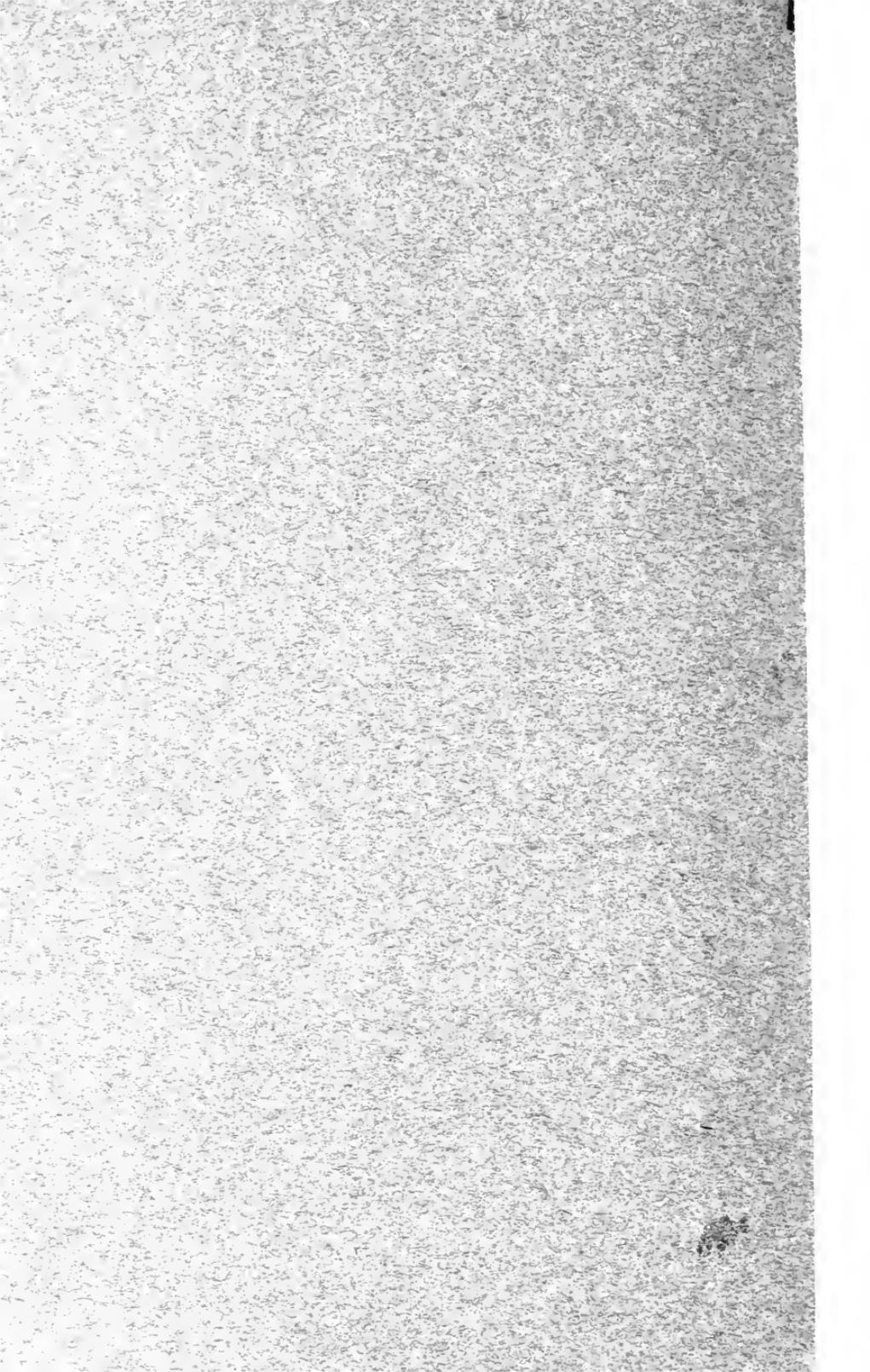




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Observations on the State of Ireland, and the Want of Employment of its Population, with a Description of the River Shannon.

SECTION I.

The State of Ireland compared with that of England, as to internal Intercourse and the Means of Employing the Population.

THE Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland having closed their valuable labours, made their report to Parliament in July 1830. In that report the evidence is classed under the following heads :—

I. State and Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland.

1. State of the Poor generally.
2. The Law and Practice in the Relations between Landlord and Tenant.
3. State of Trade.
4. Effects of Steam Navigation.
5. Manufactures, and the Effects of the Tax on Coals.
6. Savings' Banks, and Charitable Loan Societies.
7. State of the Health of the Poor.
8. State of the Country as exemplified by the Criminal Returns.

II. The Laws which affect the Poor, and the Charitable Institutions of Ireland, both public and private.

1. Laws respecting Vagrancy.
2. County Infirmarys.
3. Fever Hospitals.

4. Dispensaries.
5. Lunatic Asylums.
6. Houses of Industry.
7. General Superintendance of Charities by Grand Juries.
8. Charities supported by voluntary Contributions.
9. Asylums for the Relief of Mendicity.

III. *Remedial Measures considered.*

1. Extension of Public Works upon the Principle of Loans, re-payable and adequately secured.
2. Extension of Inland Navigation on similar principles.
3. Improvement of the Grand Jury Laws.
4. Drainage and Embankments.
5. A Correction of the Abuses incidental to the System of Tolls and Customs.
6. An Amendment of the Vestry Acts.
7. Emigration.
8. Education.
9. An Amendment of the Laws regulating the Office of Sheriff.
10. A Correction of the Abuses incidental to Custodiam Writs.
11. The Establishment of Local Tribunals for adjudication in Cases of Wills, Legacies and Intestacies for small sums.
12. The Effects of a Multiplication of Oaths, and the Mode in which Oaths are administered.
13. A Compulsory System for the Relief of the Poor.

After an able digest of the evidence, which occupies 796 folio pages, the Report concludes in these words :—

“ But in the midst of these abundant causes of good, there is still *much want of employment and great misery* in a portion both of the manufacturing and agricultural classes. “ It is with a view to the *permanent relief of this distress*,

“ that your Committee recommend the following series of
 “ measures to the most serious and early consideration of the
 “ Government and of the Legislature: it will be perceived
 “ that they are all of a simple and practical description, and
 “ are all supported by the evidence taken before your Com-
 “ mittee.”

Bills for the Extension and Amendment of Charitable Establishments.

1. A Bill to amend and consolidate the laws relating to county infirmaries in Ireland, and to permit the establishment of more than one infirmary in certain counties.
2. A Bill to amend and consolidate the laws respecting fever hospitals in Ireland, and to promote the establishment of such hospitals, so that there shall be one fever hospital at the least in every county and county-corporate in Ireland.
3. A Bill to amend and consolidate the laws respecting houses of industry in Ireland by repealing the Acts which contain in one establishment a place of punishment and an asylum for distress, and for appropriating such asylums for the future as a means of making provision for those who, from utter destitution and incurable bodily infirmity, are unable to provide for their own support.
4. A Bill to amend the laws respecting dispensaries in Ireland, rendering it imperative that the grand juries should present a sum equal in amount to the private contributions and subscriptions.
5. A Bill to amend the laws relating to charitable establishments, supported on the whole or in part from the county-rates, by enabling grand juries to appoint permanent boards of superintendance and audit.
6. A Bill to amend the laws respecting lunatic asylums, by making provision for idiots and incurable lunatics, being paupers.
7. A Bill to amend the laws respecting grand juries, and to provide that the burthen of the county-rates shall no longer be

borne exclusively by the occupying tenant; and that a principle of open contract, and of a money payment of wages, be, as far as practicable, enforced.

8. A Bill for *the extension and promotion of public works*, whether roads, bridges, canals, piers, harbours, or railways, in Ireland, placing the direction of such works under a fixed superintendance and control; and advances being made from the Treasury upon public security of an unquestionable character.

9. A Bill to amend the Subletting Act, so far as the same has any retrospective operation.

10. A Bill for *the drainage of bogs, and for the embankments of marsh-lands* in Ireland, thereby promoting the employment of the poor, and increasing the wealth and resources of the State.

11. A Bill to provide facilities for the voluntary emigration from Ireland to His Majesty's North American Colonies, the expense of such emigration being defrayed by the landlords of such emigrants, or by the emigrants themselves.

12. A Bill to repeal the existing laws respecting vagrants in Ireland, and for making better provision in lieu thereof.

13. A Bill to amend the laws respecting vestries in Ireland, by defining with more accuracy the purposes for which parochial rates may be imposed and levied, and to relieve the occupying tenant from the payment of such rates in cases of future contracts.

14. A Bill for the better and more impartial administration of justice by the correction of the abuses alleged to prevail in the sheriffs' offices in Ireland.

15. A Bill for the care of the subject by amending the laws by which writs of custodiam are issued in Ireland.

16. A Bill to make a provision whereby questions of wills, legacies, and intestacies, within certain limits, may be decided by the assistant barristers at Quarter Sessions.

17. A Bill for the promotion of religion and morality, as well as for the more effectual administration of justice by the

repeal of all unnecessary oaths, and the more solemn mode of their administration.

18. A Bill for the prevention of all illegal and improper charges at the fairs and markets throughout Ireland, under the claim of tolls and customs.

19. A Bill to provide for the education of the poorer classes of all His Majesty's subjects in Ireland, and to permit the erection and support of parochial schools.

Of the value to Ireland of these measures there cannot be a question. They embrace all the leading grievances under which that country has laboured. It is however with reference to the two heads, public works and improving waste lands, that the following observations are made, with the view of throwing some additional light on the subject, and preventing the proposed measures of relief from failing, like so many of their predecessors, to meet the evils they were intended to remove.

Previously to the framing any legislative measure of relief for Ireland, it is of the first importance to consider what are her most pressing wants :—how far, practically, they are susceptible of alleviation ;—and, how their recurrence may be prevented.

Unless the proposed measures then be founded on these considerations they will fail to effect any improvement in her condition ; and, like former plans of *intended* relief, end in disappointment and increasing difficulties.

It has been much urged, and by none more than those who have large rentals and large investments in the funds, that the *want of capital* is the besetting evil of Ireland. Those who make this assertion should go further ; they should point out, for what is capital required ; where are its deficiencies discernible ; how can it be profitably employed ; what inducements can be held out to its possessors ; and what would be the result of its employment.

But, the assertion that "Ireland wants capital" is both vague and unfounded. It is the offspring of ignorance as to the real state of the country, and is disproved by the fact, that Ireland has actually laid aside, in money, no less than £14,181,100. within the short space of six and a half years, as shewn by the following authenticated return.

Amount of Government Stock imported and exported from 6th July, 1824, to 5th January, 1831.

| | Transferred to England. | Transferred from England. |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Consols | £1,133,500 | £3,588,800 |
| 3 per Cent. Reduced | 972,600 | 1,122,800 |
| 3½ Reduced | 785,000 | 1,059,900 |
| Old 3½ per Cent | 1,324,100 | 10,663,900 |
| New 4 per Cent. | 953,400 | 2,281,600 |
| Ditto as New 3½ per Cent. | 52,500 | 685,200 |
| | <hr/> £5,221,100 | <hr/> 19,402,200 |
| | <hr/> 5,221,100 | <hr/> |
| Balance in favor of Ireland | £ 14,181,100 | <hr/> |

Here we find a balance of fourteen millions of accumulated Irish capital sent to England for the purchase of British securities. Why has not that capital been retained in Ireland, and invested in the purchase or improvement of land, in buildings, trade, commerce or manufactures?

It is clear that the naked averment of Ireland being in want of capital, is unfounded. This rids the question of a great difficulty and enables us to see our way somewhat clearer. The question, the useful, vital question is, how are we to turn this current of accumulating capital, as in England, to setting the springs of industry in action, and giving a value to productive labour?

It is not capital, but *available* capital, that Ireland wants. Capital that will be so employed as to reproduce itself through the instrumentality of labour.

Is then Ireland in a condition to induce capital, to seek investments in the same direction that it does in England? He is a bold man who will answer this in the affirmative.

“The previous question” then is, what should be done to bring it into a condition that capital may be profitably employed—and labour made available?

The following short summary will be found to comprise the leading features of the case.

1. The population want employment.
2. That can only be supplied by the pursuits of agriculture, trade or commerce.
3. These cannot be promoted without intercourse and interchange.

The application of these first principles to the present condition of Ireland is the object of the following pages.

It may be laid down as an indisputable point, and it applies with the greatest force to an agricultural country, that whatever may be the quality of the soil, or the extent of its population; no matter what the natural products may be; without a facility of intercourse for persons, and of interchange for produce, they avail nothing. They are the gold in the mine. We need go into no refinements of political economy. We need search for no hidden causes of pauperism or turbulence; but, finding a region with a dense unemployed population, yet wanting the necessary facilities of interchange for its labour, we may pronounce at once that such district cannot make any progress in industry or capital, or even in civilization. On the contrary, in proportion as its population increases, while the means of intercourse remain restricted, will the evils increase. The population will remain poor; confined to the lowest description of sustenance; and dependent on the seasons for that sustenance;—ignorant, easily

excited, without industry or emulation, and degraded to the lowest scale of civilized beings.

It is not then the want of capital in Ireland which occasions that depression of which all complain, though so few have pointed to the real causes? No. Capital is an ingredient unquestionably; but Ireland must first be prepared to *employ capital profitably*. Neither is it to the abundance of capital alone that England owes its prosperity and the active spirit of trade which prevails throughout. This is the gist of the argument.

Among the first great causes of that industry and trading activity which is so characteristic of England, are, the extraordinary facilities which every part of it possesses for the interchange of produce and products: first by lines of road and internal navigation available for the purposes of interchange among the several counties; and secondly, by the connexion these navigations maintain between the interior and the sea-ports: those great vents for the produce of surplus labour, and inlets for the return of consumable foreign articles and luxuries.* 'Tis these which impart a value to its labour, its skill, industry and science; and which, in their turn, increase the value of the very capital which these incidents have themselves created. It is labour *thus rendered available*, and not the mere command of capital, which has brought England to its present state. England itself had once no capital but its soil and its population. *Available, marketable labour*, created capital; while capital, in its turn, like the shower which returns to fructify the soil, increased the facilities of trading intercourse. Thus capital and labour reciprocally become cause and effect, and the progression becomes endless.

In confirmation of this view of the subject, it is important

* The average tolls paid for the last ten years by one carrying establishment in England, Messrs. Pickfords, for the passage of their boats, to one canal company alone, was £32,000. annually.

to observe that these facilities for trading intercourse in England have increased within the last century in a commensurate degree with the increase of the population, and concurrently with the progress she has exhibited in arts, manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture.

Had, however, the population increased, as in Ireland, without a corresponding increase in the means of intercourse, by which the augmented labour of her augmented population might be disposable, it requires no great reach of mind to see that her condition, notwithstanding her poor laws, must have been as unsatisfactory and unsettled as that which many parts of Ireland at present exhibits. The system of poor laws, indeed, so far from producing any re-active principle, would, in that case, have been swallowed up in the increasing demands upon it.

The report well observes, “the population and wealth of a “country may both increase, and increase rapidly, but, if the “former proceeds in a greater ratio than the latter, an in-“crease of distress among the poor may be concurrent with “an augmentation of national wealth.” Again, “The state “of the labouring classes must depend on the proportion ex-“isting between the number of the people and the capital “which can be *profitably employed.*”

Looking at the means by which the labour of the population in England is rendered available, we see one great distinguishing feature; one universally prevailing characteristic; one so decidedly national and unique, that it would be folly to underrate it as one of the great momenta of individual and general prosperity.

We find the kingdom intersected in every part and direction with the means of interchange of commodities;—roads, canals, and rivers, either naturally navigable, or made so by human means. Every where we find those numerous conduits, like the veins and arteries in the human frame, maintaining this circulation of the life’s blood of trade and commerce in an endless and returning current between the centre and the ex-

tremities. 'Tis this unceasing and active circulation which gives strength and energy to the whole frame of society. Without it, the body politic becomes corrupt, diseased, and dangerous.

The moment any feasible channel of commercial intercourse is discovered, millions are instantly available for its prosecution ; even Irish capital finds its way to augment the overflowing fountain of British enterprize ; attracted not so much by the prospects of great returns, as the charm of security which attaches, in so pre-eminent a degree, to all that is possessed in England.*

Looking nearer at this curious mass of moving labour—of circulating industry and skill, we find no part of England, south of Durham, more than 15 miles from water-conveyance. Over three-fourths of the surface of what may be called the agricultural and manufacturing body of England, no part is distant from water-carriage more than 10 miles ; while, over one-half of that surface, no part is more than five miles distant from this great momentum of commercial and trading life. The great manufacturing districts, however, having it in the heart of their towns, and almost at their very doors.

Now look to Ireland. Compare it in a corresponding point of view :—Look for its means of giving a market value to labour and industry. Look for its invigorating sources of trading intercourse, by which “capital may be profitably employed,” more especially in those divisions which are most disturbed ; most exposed to want and pauperism ; and, withal, most populous. Compared with England, the picture of its nakedness is distressing, and almost incredible. Many great divisions of the land without water-conveyance of any kind. Those within its reach, from one cause or other, unable to turn it to advantage, or unconscious of its influence and value. Entire districts, of from 20 to 30 miles in extent,

* A considerable portion of the capital now engaged in many of the new lines of rail-roads in England, is subscribed in Ireland.

and covered with a living mass of inhabitants, almost without a road, yet bringing their produce over bye-ways and mountains, and upon horses' backs, to raise a comparatively heavy rent, the fruit of which, to them, is, to an Englishman's eye, a miserable hovel with a potatoe diet.

The committee, in their report, observe, “that in considering the question of public works, they are of opinion that, under proper control and superintendance, the execution of public works is peculiarly deserving of Parliamentary aid and countenance, as being calculated *to give an additional and a permanent stimulus to industry, an increased demand for labour, a greater facility of access to markets for all produce, and, as a further incidental advantage, making the administration of the law and the operations of the police more effective.*”

As to the means which Ireland possesses of creating internal trading intercourse, we find, besides other minor navigations, one prominent feature: one great leading line of available navigation;—*the river Shannon*; running through the centre of the island, and offering the advantages of a double coast, as it were to correct the inconvenience arising from its great breadth. Yet this first and most imposing feature in Ireland's statistics, remains comparatively unproductive as a means of internal trade. One half of it almost unknown, and the districts through which it passes for 150 British miles above Limerick, except in few situations, deriving no aid from its navigation.

In addition to the navigation of this river are the two great canals, both falling into it, and intended to connect this line of water-communication with the metropolis. From the constitution, however, of the companies governing these canals; their long mismanagement, and the original blunders and waste of means in their direction and construction, both became bankrupt without effecting an intercourse between the great vale of the Shannon and the metropolis.

Let us then compare, in their aggregate, the relative means of internal trading intercourse in England and Ireland.

British Miles.

| | |
|---|--------|
| In ENGLAND, there are of canals | 2400 |
| of Rivers, enumerating those parts only which are navigable | 2000 |
| of rail-roads now in use | 400 |
| | — 4800 |
| In IRELAND, there are of canals | 280 |
| of navigable rivers | 150 |
| of the 230 miles of river Shannon, below Lime- rick alone having been hitherto available | 60 |
| | — 490 |

4800 miles in England against 490 in Ireland.

The contrast is striking. Could it be expected that the contrast would not be equally striking in the condition of the respective populations of the two countries? The annexed map, taken from Bradshaw's excellent one of the inland navigations of England, will exhibit this contrast in a new and forcible point of view.*

Even in the present year, the relative disproportion continues to increase. In England, where a superabundance of the means of trading intercourse would appear to exist, there is yet a greater length of *new* navigations and rail-roads, now in progress, or under the consideration of Parliament, (independently of the great improvement making in her roads,) than all the existing lines of navigations of Ireland taken together!

* It is important to observe that the surface over which these 4800 miles of navigation are spread, is not larger than the surface of Ireland; being that which is south of Durham, and excluding the western and mountainous part of Wales, and the peninsula of Devonshire and Cornwall.



CHART OF THE INLAND NAVIGATIONS
of the
**INLAND NAVIGATIONS
of
ENGLAND AND IRELAND**
with the
LINES OF STEAM COMMUNICATION



No part of any river is laid down which is not navigable.

| | <i>Miles.</i> |
|---|---------------|
| In ENGLAND, there are now in progress of canals and rivers to be made navigable, } about | 40 |
| Of rail-roads | 500 |
| | — 540 |
| In IRELAND, of canal and rivers | 50 |
| of rail-roads | 5 |
| | — 55 |

Thus England will shortly exhibit an extent of locomotion for the elements of trading, equal to 5300 miles, while Ireland will probably be confined to little more than 500.

Mr. Nimmo, in his evidence before the Committee on the state of Ireland in 1824, observes, “We have more inland “navigation in Britain than in all the rest of the world put “together. The whole expenditure upon all those canals “and rivers improved, has amounted to *thirty millions sterling*. All the expenditure upon canals in Ireland, public “and private jobs, and altogether, has amounted to about “*three millions and a half*.”

Will it hereafter be doubted, that the share which inland navigations have had in England has been among the great features of her commercial prosperity?

It may be said Ireland has none of those natural sources of wealth which England enjoys. Her native coal and salt; her iron, copper, lead, and other ores, though of the two latter Ireland possesses more than abundance for all her wants. But has she not a mine of a more inexhaustible and valuable character—*her agricultural soil*? A mine, which, whether we consider it with reference to the population it employs; the certainty of a market for its produce; the return it makes; or its peculiar adaptation to the character of her population; is infinitely before all the mines and minerals of England. What then is wanting? The means of bringing that mine into profitable use. *The means of intercourse.*

Were it indeed a question how best to improve a country possessing a productive soil, adequate population, and a sufficiency of sea-ports ; experience would say, open it up, and leave the rest to the unerring course of natural influences. Intersect it with the means of interchange, and connect those means with the sea-ports, and private interest will accomplish the rest. The great lines of intercourse being established, the operations of trade and capital *created from labour alone* will supply all the ramifications necessary and best suited to the wants and capabilities of the population and the soil.

On this very plan, be it observed, are Government proceeding with respect to British America. See what lavish expenditure has been bestowed by Parliament on the means of water-conveyance in Canada, and even on the Rideau Canal alone. Is Ireland less in want of navigations, or a less interesting portion of the British Empire ?

Let us look to the active circulation of all the elements of trade and commerce along a course of 5000 miles. Look to the industry it involves, and the enterprize it stimulates. No capability is left untried ; no locality unoccupied ; no powers unemployed. Compare this with the stagnate, and mischievous, because stagnate condition, of many large divisions of Ireland, particularly in the interior. Look to those extensive districts, equal to millions of acres, (one million of which belongs to the valley of the Shannon, and in length equal to the distance between London and Liverpool,) and where the population are without the means of bringing their labour to market, except by costly land-carriage of from 20 to 40 miles. See the impossibility of labour finding a remunerative value, or capital being profitably employed, with the super-added fact of a universally too high rental. Is there a reflecting man in the kingdom will require further evidence of the cause of the anomalous state of Ireland ? A state exhibiting great want of employment for its population ;—an unimproved state of agriculture ;—the absence of a permanent

stimulus to industry ;—unemployed powers available for manufactures ;—a low rate of labour which sets the comfort of social life at defiance ;—a great disproportion between the supply of labourers and the demand for labour ;—and a generally depressed state of a still increasing population.

Is this a true description of the state of a large portion of Ireland ? Those who deny it know but little of the interior.

Shall we then look for political causes or political remedies for this state of things ? The fact is, if we give the population the means of agricultural and trading intercourse, and a rental which will leave something besides what will support a bare existence ; both hands and heads will be employed, and political considerations be reduced to a scale of comparative insignificance. But let them, on the other hand, be without hope or prospect of bettering their condition ; the active and mischievous among them will seek distinctions and employment in some other way—and the restless spirits of the day, finding unoccupied heads and unemployed hands, will raise themselves on the ruin of thousands, and to the subversion of all order and tranquillity.

SECTION II.

Of the River Shannon, its Capabilities, and the Consequences of their neglect.

It would be impossible more appropriately to introduce the following observations on the navigation of the Shannon, as an almost national feature, than by quoting a short but comprehensive comment on the same, and which appears engraved on the old *chart of the Shannon*, as it is significantly called. It is in these words—

“ At the Summer assizes of 1794, the High Sheriffs and “ Grand Juries of the counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Mayo, “ Galway, Clare, Limerick, King’s County and Tipperary, “ resolved, That the completing of the navigation of the river “ Shannon and the great rivers adjoining thereto, from *Lough Allen to Limerick*, will tend *effectually to improve and open the home and foreign markets, to the produce of more than two millions of acres of land in the heart of the kingdom*; and that the execution of this great navigation will “ effectually advance the *commerce, manufactures, agriculture and population of this kingdom, and the consequent strength of the empire at large.*”

Assenting most unequivocally to the resolutions of these Grand Juries, thus passed 37 years ago, let us proceed to the consideration of the *present state* of the Shannon, with this observation, that but little progress has been made, during that long interval, in following up the suggestions of those men who have taken so sound and comprehensive a view of the subject. An important fact may also be added, namely, that since those resolutions were passed, both the population and the rental of those two millions of acres have been doubled; while the Shannon, the only outlet for the produce of their

labour, remains yet unavailable as a means of introducing them either to the home or foreign markets.

The river Shannon, unequalled in the British empire, embraces 234 miles of continuous navigation; and, from the circumstance of its running through the centre of the kingdom, may be compared, for the purposes of intercourse, to *double that length of coast*. The advantages of water conveyance are thus presented to an extent of country equal to the whole line of coast between Belfast and Cork; or to more than the entire eastern coast of England.

The great feature of this extraordinary river is its diversified character. For a distance of 60 miles from the sea to the city of Limerick, it presents a magnificent estuary and tide-way, without bar or other impediment whatever, and with a flood equal to a height of 20 feet at the city quays. This part of the river possesses several deep bays or inlets, and receives the waters of several rivers, some of which enjoy the tide-way for a considerable distance up their channels, and all susceptible of great improvement. By these, the benefit of water-conveyance may be extended to many rising towns, and to extensive, rich, populous, and, we may add, *disturbed* districts.

The great estuary of the Fergus, extending 10 miles to the town of Clare, with the means of extension to Ennis, the capital of the county of Clare, here pushes the benefit of navigation into the centre of a district unrivalled, perhaps, in Britain for depth and fertility of soil, and unfortunately, at this moment, as unequalled in the open violence and lawless acts of its population.

With the exception of the slender aid which the navigation enjoys at Clare, we have this river washing the shores of the county for more than 70 British miles, from Kilrush to Scarriff, without accommodation of almost any kind for shipping intercourse, except in the city of Limerick. The southern side of the Shannon, including the Limerick and Kerry shores,

is equally destitute of trading conveniences, notwithstanding the many favorable situations it presents.

Of the city and port of Limerick much may be said. With a rapidly increasing trade, it yet possesses comparatively but few advantages from its commanding position on the river. The communication between it and the districts, even on the water's edge, is carried on principally *over land*; while above the city, until within the last few years that steam navigation has been introduced upon its waters, the river has been, as it were, a sealed book. In a word, Limerick, although the only sea-port on the river stretching 150 miles into the interior, may be said to have hitherto derived comparatively no advantage from transit by water. In the port itself, it will scarcely be believed that there is no convenience whatever for repairing vessels or lying afloat.

Above Limerick to Killaloe the navigation is varied, being part still water and part river. The history of this part of the navigation, with the variety of masters it has claimed; for protectors or encouragers they should not be called;—the vast sums injudiciously expended on it;—and the professional blunders of which it has been the victim; would form a curious memento of all that is discreditable to the enterprize and intelligence of the parties concerned, or the character of Government, under whose immediate control it has been for so long a period.

From Killaloe in the county of Clare, to its source in the county of Leitrim, the river assumes a great variety of character. In some places it stretches out into seas, or lakes, two of which, Lough Derg and Lough Ree, are above 20 British miles long each. In other parts, the river assimilates itself more to that of the river navigations of England, with the combined advantages of sailing and tracking, as seen in the Thames, the Mersey, and the Severn. In other parts, it forms a succession of small lakes, peculiarly in want of artificial helps, which, however, the use of steam navigation would completely overcome; and lastly, in many situations,

it approaches almost to still-water navigation. The falls and rapids, which on the whole river amount to an elevation of 146 feet 10 inches, are overcome by lateral canals and locks. Throughout its course, however, it possesses the rare quality of having a sufficient depth of water for all the purposes of internal intercourse. From this diversity of character, it is manifest how much its navigation is open to improvements by the removal of difficulties and obstructions:—the adding trackways; constructing small harbours, quays and landing-places, and making approaches to the same; widening and raising arches of bridges; establishing beacons and other guides to aid the navigator through the intricacy and windings of its channels, and in seasons when the water extends beyond its natural course:—the cutting the banks and deepening many parts, and, on the whole, affording abundant opportunities for the application of human skill and judgment.

In all these respects, notwithstanding the sums which have been expended on it during the last century; the Shannon, with such unquestionable latent resources, presents a lamentable picture of great neglect—great misapplication of power—great ignorance of its resources—great want of enterprize, and even worldly wisdom, on the part of its natural protectors and patrons, the owners of the towns and villages and the soil, in its vicinity, and throughout its entire course.

The Shannon washes the shores of 10 counties out of 32, *viz.* Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, King's-County, Galway, Tipperary, Clare, Limerick and Kerry. All of these are abundant in population, and susceptible of receiving great extension and improvement in their agriculture; and although many of them are periodically exposed to the greatest distress, and even famine, yet are without the power of mutual relief or co-operation.

Taking then the double length of coast which the 10 counties present to the navigation, at 500 miles; and which, considering the extent of the bays, inlets and rivers, is under the fact; it leaves an average of 50 miles of *coast* to each county.

This fact alone is sufficiently indicative of what may be done through the instrumentality of this *one river*.

Running from North to South, the several counties on the Shannon naturally present great diversity of soil, and even climate. Some of the counties are mountainous, with deep productive vallies, on which may be cheaply fed vast quantities of sheep and cattle. Other counties are flat and humid, yet susceptible of great amelioration from the labour of their population, under the guidance of skill and capital. Several with soils on a substratum of limestone, are in all seasons warm and dry, and peculiarly adapted to the production of the finest qualities of grain and other produce; while some to the southward, possess deep and tenacious soils, requiring strong manures and much labouring.

Under such circumstances it is evident that the several parts of this great territory must be variously effected by the seasons. Wet seasons are beneficial to some, and almost ruinous to others. Some are abundant in seasons of drought which bring scarcity and even famine to others. Some divisions of counties on the Shannon are well adapted for descriptions of produce which are unattainable in others. Some excel in wheat and potatoes; others in barley, oats, and rape; while their neighbours' are better adapted to pasture.

Natural manures also, those essentials in agricultural districts, are not only excellent, but equal to any demand throughout a great portion of the river, yet unknown in the rest. The black and white marls of the Shannon, which are easily raised, and accessible and free to all, are among the most bountiful gifts of Nature to this extraordinary country.

Again, *turf*, that prime necessary of life in Ireland, is abundant in the greater number of districts on the Shannon, yet deficient or inferior in quality in many. Building materials, as stone, sand, lime, flags, bricks, slates, and marble, are cheap and abundant in many, while frequently the adjoining counties are wholly without them.

The *bogs* on both sides of the Shannon contiguous to the line of the grand canals between Balinasloe and Tullamore, may be noticed as illustrative of their improvable value. There, bog-land, originally of no value, now lets freely at 30s. an acre. In many parts of the Shannon and over districts of from five to ten miles long, the deep rich callows, annually submerged by the rising waters of the Shannon, produce abundant crops of *hay*, yet in other and easily approached parts, and in many towns on its banks, hay is extremely scarce and dear.

Of the *reclaimable bogs*, callows, and marsh lands, it is unnecessary to say more than that in no part of Ireland are they more extensive, or more within the reach of human means for improvement. The evidence of Mr. Mullins before the committee, and the report of Mr. Grantham in his survey of the Shannon, are conclusive on this head.

In a country then so extensive; so variable in soil and climate; so various in produce and natural products; can there be a question of the importance of interchange, particularly for bulky commodities? Is it not an unnatural state of things that in such a country, and with such a river flowing through its centre, some districts should be in want, not merely of comforts and conveniences, but of *the common necessities of life, food and fuel*, and almost approaching to famine; while adjoining districts on the same river have them in *abundance and to spare*?

It is here worth noticing a remarkable but lamentable proof of the ignorance which prevails respecting the capabilities and situation of this river, and even of the state of Ireland. At the time these pages are being written, the "Irish Distress Committee," who are receiving subscriptions to the amount of tens of thousands of pounds for the distressed districts in Ireland, are purchasing potatoes and other provisions in many parts of England, *to be sent to Ireland*. How and when these provisions are to get to the interior of Mayo and Roscommon remains to be seen. But this very

“Distress Committee” are absolutely taking merit to themselves for caution and penetration, and, “anxious that no “misconception should arise as to the principles,” (ignorance, they should have said,) “on which they have acted, they “assure the subscribers that *in no instance has money been transmitted to Ireland.*” Why, *money is what is wanted in Ireland, not provisions.* With money, there may be had in the neighbouring counties connected by water, potatoes at *twopence the stone of 14 pounds weight*, with meal and other articles of food proportionably low.

Money expended in these and other counties in Ireland would be doubly useful. Charity would thus be twice blessed. It would relieve those who have provisions but no market, through the want of money in those distressed districts as well as those who have neither provisions or wherewithal to purchase them. As well might a London Distress Committee send coals to relieve the paupers of Newcastle or Cumberland. That *money* should not be given to the poor themselves is correct in principle; but that the committee should boast that “*in no instance has money been transmitted to Ireland!*” is almost unaccountable. The money subscribed in London for this truly beneficent object *should have been expended in Ireland and nowhere else.* There, provisions are cheap. Yet what ignorance; what waste of means; what ill-directed bounty. To purchase dear in England, instead of cheap in Ireland, and for the relief of the distressed districts in that country, and within a few hours conveyance of the very seat of famine.*

* The following is the extraordinary document alluded to as taken from the Morning Herald, London paper.

Committee Room, 27, Cornhill.
April 30th, 1831.

Anxious that no misconception should arise as to, the principles upon which they have acted, the Irish Distress Committee respectfully report to the public that the fund entrusted to their care has been exclusively applied to the purchase of provisions, and that *in no instance has money been transmitted to Ireland*; and that concurrent arrangements have been

But perhaps the *return* trade which introduces all foreign consumable articles, is as important to the public (and ought to be so in the eye of Government) as the finding a vent for the produce of their own labour. Without the facilities of water-conveyance, how are all bulky or weighty articles to be introduced into the heart of a country; as sugars, salt, herrings, foreign timber, coal, iron, earthenware, glass, and British manufactured goods in general.

The middle and western districts, besides the disadvantage of bad roads, generally leading over the summits of the hills, are ill provided with cars suitable for the conveyance of such articles. Besides the articles to be introduced by *return* trade from the sea-ports; the *interchangeable* commodities are, turf, brick, sand, lime, flags, marble, slates, native timber, manures, kiln-coals, culm, building stone; with potatoes, meal, flour, grain, and other articles of consumption.*

Were there even no other consideration, the encouragement to secure the *prompt* and careful distribution of the subscriber's bounty.

The committee deem it to be their duty to state that perfect tranquillity has been preserved in the distressed districts: the sufferers enduring with resignation and patience their severe privations, from which no effort of their own can relieve them, before the coming in of the potatoe crop: until which period the committee have the painful fact to state that thousands of their famishing fellow-countrymen can look to no other source for relief than the benevolent sympathy of the public.

W. H. HYETT, *Secretary.*

* There cannot be a more striking proof of the backward state of trading intercourse on the Shannon, than that the articles of poultry and eggs are as yet unknown as a source of profit to the peasantry, and in extensive districts peculiarly favourable to their production. The importance of eggs alone, as an article of export, is considerable; as their produce no way conduces to rent; but, being the result of the care and attendance of the females, the return goes to the purchase of conveniences and articles of dress.

The mere value of this article of export is considerable, and England now pays in money £500. a day to Ireland for eggs, nine-tenths of which are received by the counties on the northern and eastern coasts.

ment of the consumption of *foreign timber* alone, should be a sufficient inducement to Government to promote water-conveyance in every possible direction. The use of a single ton of foreign timber in a country so young in the arts of civilized and social life, involves considerations which ought not to be lightly valued. It effects the improvement of dwellings, with the increase of useful and domestic furniture and the mechanic arts. These draw in their train improved habits and social enjoyments. They give a stimulus to labour; excite industry; and create a taste for a better description of food and enjoyments; and go to the very essence of improvement in the condition of the people.

Nature appears to have done its part; the capabilities of the river almost provoke the population to industry and intercourse. All the elements of internal and profitable traffic are in abundance. It cannot therefore be necessary to urge more strongly than by the bare enumeration of these facts, the value of an intercourse which, from some cause or other, Ireland has never yet possessed.*

How then can we convey to English eyes the picture of the Shannon through its great course. Let us suppose a navigable river taking its rise in some distant county in En-

* It would be impossible here to detail the many situations where advantage may be taken of the deep-water bays and rivers connected with the Shannon, both below and above Limerick. Of the rivers, may be noticed, the Fergus to Ennis; the Deel to Askeaton; the Maigue to Adaire; the branch of the Shannon to Scariff; the Rossmore to Woodford; the Brusna to Parsonstown; the Suck into the County Roscommon; the Cloonastra; the Inney to Ballymahon; the Camlin to Longford; and the lakes and river to Boyle.

Mr. Mullins, besides the several lines of valuable water-communication suggested by him; as that from Athboy to Kells, and the continuation to Cavan and Lough Erne; and another connecting that lake with the Foyle at Londonderry, also alludes to this extension of the Shannon to Boyle, and observes that, for a few thousand pounds, 40 miles of additional navigation may be gained "*into the most inaccessible parts of the county of Roscommon, where agricultural improvement is scarcely known, and from whence the peasantry periodically migrate into England in search of that employment which they are not able to procure at home.*"

gland, as far from Liverpool as Essex or Middlesex. Suppose it occasionally spreading itself into noble and picturesque sheets of water, of more than 20 miles in length, with numerous islands, receiving the waters of many rivers, and stretching its bays into the adjacent counties, as it were to increase the measure of its utility and beauty. See it winding its way through Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire, and the rich soil of Leicestershire, and after passing by Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, falling into the estuary of the Mersey, in Lancashire. See it presenting to each of these counties the benefit of 50 miles of navigation, and we shall have a correct view of the extent and capabilities of this river.

But how shall we describe the state in which it has remained for ages as to trading intercourse, and in which one half of it remains to this very hour. Absolutely wanting in all the incidents of navigation. For nearly 100 miles of its length, not a sail or boat to be met with on its waters. No appearance of utility; no indications of industry or capital; even its beauties unknown. Deficient to an extent scarcely credible in roads and approaches to it, and consequently having but little connexion with the interior where Nature designed its influence should extend. Without any employment of its waters it flows unheeded by, and unproductive of any good. Over many of its districts of great extent, from the absence of that control which human skill and means could have effected, its waters have become a source of wide-spreading waste.

The inevitable result of all this neglect and inactivity is, that instead of becoming the direct means of connexion and intercourse between this family of counties situated on its banks, and of the consolidation of the interests of its population; it has, on the contrary, grown up, and remains to the present, a positive and mischievous line of *separation*;—the enemy, rather than the ally of social life. Instead of proving the parent of family and trading alliances, it has en-

gendered nothing but a repulsive spirit, productive of enmity, district broils, and almost civil wars.

So effectually has this alienation been accomplished through the succession of ages, and this fourth-part of Ireland, thus detached by the Shannon, that it became not merely distinct as a province, but as a little kingdom in itself: proverbially the country of a people *sui generis*; wild, lawless, and turbulent.

“The kingdom of Connaught,” to this hour, is a sort of title to which its inhabitants lay claim on the very plea of that separation for which the Shannon, in their eyes, appeared to have been destined. A little consideration on the part of the rulers of the land should have taught them to regard it as designed by a bountiful Providence to be rather a bond of union, and a source of mutual dependence, strength, protection, and prosperity.

So little have our predecessors in the government of Ireland sought to promote this union, that we see them almost encouraging alienation and sowing the seeds of distrust and even hostility.

We find the lines of military defence on the Shannon strong and pointed against this “Kingdom of Connaught;” while they are open and defenceless to Leinster and the East; as if it were a country from which invasion was expected, or whose population it was expedient to keep in subjection and apart.

Need we go further in explaining the cause of the want of approaches to the river;—of bridges to connect the neighbouring counties;—of improved navigation on its waters;—or the incidents of trade upon its banks.

Take the county of Roscommon for instance, which stretches for above 80 British miles along those banks, yet without traffic of any kind upon its waters:—deriving no advantage whatever from its navigation; and in many parts of its great extent presenting a picture of destitution, famine,

and insurrection, while other parts are in peace, and even in abundance.

Before we leave this county let us look for a moment to its sources of remunerative employment, and see how they are dried up. The town of Roscommon, the capital of the county, lies within four miles of some deep bays of this great river, yet, although so close to water-conveyance leading to Limerick, or, by the canal to Dublin; and so favourably circumstanced for the conveyance of bulky articles; the whole produce of a district 20 miles in extent and round this county-town, except the little which is sent to Dublin, is conveyed over bad roads and by inferior carts and horses, a distance of 40 miles to the towns of Sligo or Galway on the western coast of the kingdom; and getting back from those places its timber and other foreign produce. How, then, can the produce of the labour of this great county be brought to market at any thing like a remunerative price? How can its industry be rewarded? Do we not see in this alone the primary cause of that absence of employment which drives its hordes to England in search of labour: this very county sending out a large portion of that peasantry which migrate annually to England after a fatiguing journey of 100 miles by Dublin.

The river Suck, also, one of the tributary streams of the Shannon, washes the southern shores of this county, and offers the resources of its navigation: a river which is already navigable a considerable distance from its fall into the Shannon; yet, like the rest, unavailable for the purposes of intercourse. Can we here avoid asking why this strange anomaly exists? Why has Nature thus for centuries been so circumscribed in her efforts, so unaided in her operations, and almost counteracted in her great designs? This must be reserved for a more fitting occasion. The scope of these observations is merely to draw attention to the means of improving the condition of an extensive and interesting portion of Ireland. Let us then look in detail at the leading

wants of this navigation for the practical purpose of aiding in their amelioration.

The first great feature to which attention should be directed, is the extraordinary *deficiency of roads and approaches* to the river by which to connect it with the interior. So little has it been regarded as allied to the prosperity of the districts and towns by which it flows, that few of the former have any connexion with it: while most of the latter have, as it were, turned their backs upon it, as though its proximity were injurious.

Roads and even mail-coach-roads, in many situations, run within a few miles of it, yet the river itself remains inaccessible from them. Districts of twenty to thirty miles in length are without any landing or shipping accommodation or even approach to the water.

Mr. Nimmo, in his evidence before the Lords' Committee in 1824, observes—"The Shannon has been made navigable "into Lough Allen, but it is remarkable that, upon the western coast of the broad parts of the Shannon, *we have not a single landing-place*. This complaint was made to me "last season, and, upon examination, I found it was a most "desirable thing *to make provision for landing-places on both sides of the river*. *We have no quays or roads to the water at any part of the Shannon, except at the bridges*. "I should suppose that *four or five thousand pounds* will accomplish all that is wanted in making roads and landing-places."

Large sums of money have been expended on the Shannon to improve its navigable properties, but had millions been expended, of what avail would it have been while the necessary roads, approaches, and landing-places were neglected? Surely this oversight was the greatest of all blunders.

Is it possible to read this evidence and be surprized at the population being in want of employment and disturbed? To this however may be added, that, between Killaloe in the county of Clare, and Drumisna in the county of Leitrim, a

distance of 107 British miles by water, there are but seven bridges, one of which is that of Portumna, constructed of timber, and over which the tolls charged by Government and received into the public treasury for a series of years, have been so high as to amount almost to a prohibition to all intercourse. A foot-passenger, for each time of going over and returning, paying *three-pence*; half the amount of a day's wages among many of the labouring classes; a single horse and car with a load, going and returning, paying the enormous sum of *sixteen-pence*.*

Under such circumstances, how can the labour of these districts leave any return to the farmer? How can he be induced to employ the now idle hands upon his land? There is, in fact, no inducement to turn the available surplus labour to account, and it is now dissipated in the destruction of property; the "turning up" the lands of peaceable proprietors, without ostensible motive, and merely because the want of employment creates dissatisfaction, and turns every circumstance into a grievance. This, too, where, if the farmer had sufficient inducement to expend more labour on his land, not an idle hand would be found in the country, which is invariably but half laboured and half productive. These facts fully explain the reason why, in Ireland, the class of hired agricultural labourers does not exist, and who, in England, are the real workers of the soil.

Another feature arising out of the want of roads and ap-

* In a military point of view, this deficiency of the means of communication between the counties of Tipperary and Galway, thus separated by the river, need not be insisted on: yet even this bridge, the only crossing into Connaught for a distance of 37 miles, and though at this hour in the possession and under the superintendence of Government, is in a state of the *greatest possible dilapidation*. Government are even now called on to protect the peace of those districts at a great expence, yet the two counties between which this bridge is the *sole connexion*, levied under grandjury presentments last year, no less a sum than £77,000., while this important bridge, without exception the most important in either counties, is allowed to fall into decay from want of the outlay of a *single hundred pounds*.

proaches to the Shannon is not unworthy attention. Where productive labour and industrious habits would, under a better state of things, prevail, we find the practice of illicit distillation in excess, with its invariable concomitants idleness, drunkenness, rioting, and poverty. In many districts, from the absence of roads, and the means of turning agriculture to an honest and useful purpose, illicit distillation offers the most profitable returns to the farmer. Thus the want of the means of intercourse, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. The difficulty of reaching a market for his produce is at once the bane of the agriculturist and the protection of the distiller. Under such circumstances, the river, in fact, instead of being the source of civilization and improved habits, becomes the safeguard to the smuggler and marauder. The extent to which illicit distillation is there carried is incredible. In many situations, were it not for the *home market* which private distillation offers, rotation of crops could not be maintained, and there would be no market for the finest produce, except at a ruinous cost of labour and land-carriage.

The next great feature of the Shannon, is the almost total want of those essentials and conveniences for trading, without which it is comparatively useless, viz. shelter-harbours, piers, quays and landing-places, land-marks and beacons ; the want even of these latter, during the Winter half-year, would render many otherwise convenient little harbours exposed to risks, delays, and injury to the produce carried, sufficient to counteract all natural advantages, and ruin an otherwise profitable trading.*

* A single fact will be sufficient to explain the ruinous consequences of delay in the progress of inland intercourse. An industrious trader and carrier on the Shannon sent up his three boats, of about 50 tons burthen each, from Limerick, with timber, deals, some wheat, and various other articles ; they were to proceed to the upper Shannon, and bring back return freights of native coals, and produce. At the expiration of three months and five days his boats had accomplished their journey without

'Tis here, perhaps, the relative positions of England and Ireland are most forcibly contrasted, and the value and consequences of available local capital most apparent. 'Tis in these respects, also, that the aid of Government could most beneficially be applied, in giving life and efficiency to the natural resources of Irish navigations. Many districts may be pointed out, where, with water-conveyance at their very doors, they yet send their produce by land-carriage above 20 or 30 miles. 'Tis needless to comment on the loss of time and expence of such a mode of transit; yet an outlay of a few hundred pounds in making a quay, or an approach to the river, would have changed that ill-directed current of expense. The question is, where shall the capital be found? who shall make the disbursement? All desire it; but who is to provide the patriotic purse? who to expend money for the public good? To render the rivers and canals in Ireland more available, and to supply the necessary approaches, harbours, piers, landing-places, &c. *Government must devise the remedy.* It is their duty—it is their interest to do so. *Private resources are not applicable;* individual capital will not be applied except for individual purposes.

In the "Report" the committee observe that "Grand Juries may also, with advantage, *be allowed* a power of presenting, "if they shall think fit, in aid of small piers and landing-places on the banks of the great navigable rivers." This is to the point. But if there be a body in the kingdom least adapted for suggesting, promoting, or maintaining such incidents to navigation and internal intercourse, *it is that of Grand Juries.* Their constitution; the class of persons who compose the body; the personal objects and interests which each member has to advocate (and which, as a matter of course, would take precedence) all render such a body wholly

any other interruption than such as the navigation presented. The distance by land up the river was about 120 miles. It need not be stated that what, under other circumstances, would have been a profitable trading, eventually proved a loss.

unfit for such duties. *They never would "think fit:"* besides, the practical knowledge of the wants of the respective navigations is not to be found among Grand Jurors, and in this case the proverb would be verified, for "what is every " man's business would be found to be nobody's." The report of the Lords' Committee of 1825 on the state of Ireland, speaking of the system of grand jury taxation, observes— " it is stated, however, that more is still necessary to be " done ; that the mode of *deciding what works are to be un- " dertaken*, of regulating the expenditure, and of passing the " accounts, is still in many respects imperfect."

As a really efficient measure, and one that would tend greatly to the benefit of the community and give effect to local capabilities, it should be made *compulsory* on grand juries, on the requisition of some authorised, competent, and responsible body, (under proper regulations and under a given sum) to raise the necessary funds off counties or baronies ; or undertake the repayment of the same, if advanced by Government, for the execution of works of public utility or necessity ; or that such works should take precedence. Local wants cannot otherwise be supplied.*

* Numberless proofs of the want of such a provision, for the execution of works of unquestionable importance and necessity, may be furnished in every county in Ireland, and where local or private capital are neither available or applicable. The present dilapidated state of Portumna Bridge just alluded to, is a case in point ; so, also, was the neglect in repairing the Bridge over the Shannon at Killaloe, for years after some of its arches had been swept away. During the time that bridge remained impassable, from the Winter of 1821 to that of 1824, the counties adjoining were seriously inconvenienced, and, for a distance of 40 miles, were depending for connexion on the one timber bridge at Portumna, and that in a condition that rendered it hazardous to pass over it.

It would be the support of a broken reed, were counties left dependant on grand juries, and until they should *think fit*, for works of even first-rate necessity. While the bridge at Killaloe remained in a dilapidated condition, the grand juries of the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, and Galway, all deeply interested in its preservation, levied no less than £412,060. ; yet did not *think fit* to raise £2,600. for this necessary work.

In another point of view, the navigations of Ireland are extremely deficient, as compared with those of England; namely, in all that is essential to quick and profitable trading; as cranes, weighing machines, well-appointed boats and barges, stores conveniently situated, tackle of all sorts, and the thousand aids and contrivances which human skill has devised for expediting business. The want of these, which come within the scope of private capital, is attributable to the absence of the former class, and to which private means are not applicable. On the entire 500 miles of *coast* of the Shannon, there was not, twelve months back, a single crane; an article which, in England, is as common as a waggon or an anchor.

Were such a river to be met in England, it would long since have presented a picture unequalled in the world, for a combination of all that could embellish or improve a country, or increase the resources of its commerce.

The last measure connected with the river Shannon, and undertaken by desire of Government, affords a striking illustration of the absence of sound views on the value or want

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Clare .. | levied, in 1822 | £22,933 |
| 1823 | | 22,140 |
| 1824 | .. | 23,904 |
| Limerick ——— | in 1822 | 31,763 |
| 1823 | | 32,579 |
| 1824 | | 31,195 |
| Tipperary ——— | in 1822 | 50,335 |
| 1823 | | 54,563 |
| 1824 | | 47,166 |
| Galway ——— | in 1822 | 32,456 |
| 1823 | | 28,067 |
| 1824 | | 33,949 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total levied in 3 years.... | | £412,050 |
| <hr/> | | |

This bridge might have remained impassable to this day, had it not been for the circumstance of Doctor Arbuthnot, then Bishop of Killaloe, coming to reside at the See house, and being much inconvenienced by the want of the bridge, used his influence and had it repaired.

of inland intercourse in Ireland. Ten years ago, the late justly celebrated John Rennie was directed to have the Shannon surveyed to its source; not, however, as might be expected, with reference to the only object with which the consideration of that river ought to be accompanied—the improvement of its navigation; but, regarding its navigable properties as of secondary importance, the survey was directed to ascertain the practicability of *lowering its waters*, thus increasing the estates of a few proprietors, and improving the value of a few thousand acres of land. The effect of this measure would have been, to render the river useless for ever after as a means of internal intercourse, the depth of water being at present no more than adequate to the wants of the navigation, and in dry seasons barely so.

In pursuance of this object, he appointed Mr. Grantham, a civil engineer, on whose professional knowledge and accuracy he had every reliance, and despatched him to Ireland for the purpose. When we hear of such a commission, overlooking the great destinies of this river, and the interests of that extensive territory of which it was the sole navigation, one is almost tempted to believe it the act of some deadly foe to Ireland, rather than of a wise and paternal government. Can we, at least, doubt, that the capabilities of this navigation, and the value of interchange on labour and industry were unappreciated?

Not a word is said in this commission of the wants of the navigation, or of the risk, if not possible ruin, it might bring on the trading intercourse of so many counties. Nothing of the danger of *shutting them out* from “*the home and foreign markets*;” nor any anticipation of the consequences of ten years more of an augmented population—a more restricted demand for labour—increasing rents, and inevitable distress and turbulence.

Mr. Grantham, however, under his instructions, proceeded with his arduous task during the years 1821 and 1822. He produced an able report, with an accurate survey and sections

of the entire river. These were accompanied by elaborate calculations and a detail of the acres of good and bad land which each proprietor would obtain when the levels of the water were reduced; (that is, irrecoverably destroyed.)

The estimate of this destroying process was above £300,000. The death of Mr. Rennie brought the survey to a close;—put an end to the project;—and left to the Shannon its waters, and its capabilities, to confer blessings upon future generations.

It is impossible here to attribute intentional neglect or mischief to any one, and the whole may be set down to that blundering, and ignorance of the real wants of Ireland, which has so marred her progress for centuries.*

This measure of reducing the waters of the Shannon may be attempted to be justified by its connexion with the project of reclaiming the bogs and waste lands of Ireland; but had due consideration been given to the *causes* of the unemployed state of the population over the two millions of acres;—to the connexion between those causes and the want of inland intercourse;—and the future inestimable value of the Shannon as the only means of creating it;—a moment's consideration would have sufficed to shew the real tendency of the measure. It would only have been like a plan of turning the Thames from its course that the population might pass freely across its bed, or of levelling London with the ground, for the sake of increasing its parks and pleasure grounds.

Look at the extreme jealousy with which all counties, corporations, public bodies, and even individuals in England regard the slightest interference with the waters of their navigations. Look at the vast sums expended in counteracting whatever might by possibility affect their levels or

* Can there be a more convincing proof of the little interest that is felt on the subject of Irish navigation, than that to this hour the leading lines of canals, which have been constructed within the last 35 years, are not laid down on any existing map. Hydrographers were wont to be the aids to commerce. But they too will do nothing without patronage.

supply of water. Had such a measure as reducing the water levels of a navigation of 100 miles been proposed in England, one half the kingdom would have been in arms in an instant to crush the project in its birth. But in Ireland, and the centre of Ireland too, no one cared for navigations; no one used them or valued them; and while the British Government were expending hundreds of thousands in America on inland navigation, they were in Ireland, coolly balancing the value of a few thousand acres of land against the trading and agricultural interests of millions of acres and their inhabitants.

Without the facilities of intercourse, what value would there be in improving the waste lands of Ireland? It would have no effect but to improve the property of a few proprietors, and give a greater range to the spread of a pauper population; but never could improve the condition of that population, or increase their *permanent sources of employment*. The population on those very reclaimed lands, would soon of themselves drop into the condition of the other unemployed districts, and only augment the mischief.

This survey of Mr. Grantham's, however, though taken with a different view, is yet available for really useful purposes, and is, without exception, the most valuable document on the state of the Shannon in existence. It cost the nation some thousand pounds, but most probably has never once been looked at since it was delivered to the Irish Government.*

Some justification may be found for the neglect of such capabilities of intercourse, in the circumstances of the great extent and peculiarities of the navigation rendering detached efforts unavailing. The very magnitude of the object has been urged as sufficient to damp the ardor and energies of even the most competent and enterprizing. It is true, com-

* Mr. Grantham in making this survey, and in the progress of his professional avocations, saw the value of the river Shannon as a great vent for the surplus labor of so many counties. He confirmed the resolutions of the grand juries of 1794, and to him is owing the first introduction of steam navigation on that river, in the year 1827.

bined exertions and systematic efforts, which nothing but great co-operation, or *national means* could produce, were essential to this great work. This may be some extenuation for the supineness of the land-owners and men of property, though none for the national Governments of the last century.

In speaking of the Shannon as a means of trading intercourse, we must not confine ourselves to the extent of acres over which that influence would have operated, but also to those towns which would have derived advantage from its improved navigation.* The extension of the intercourse between the Irish and English ports also by steam navigation has given still greater importance to inland intercourse, and is peculiarly favourable to those towns enjoying the benefit of water-carriage to the metropolis.

It has been frequently urged that the neglect which this portion of Ireland laboured under has been attributable to the circumstance of its inadequate representation in Parliament. There may, perhaps, be some truth in the statement. Had this great territory of 250 miles in length been efficiently represented, and had it during the last century received the attention its importance demanded, most probably the numerous towns connected with the Shannon or within reach of its influence would long since have exhibited a different aspect.

With the exception of the boroughs of Athlone, and Limerick, each of which sends but one member to Parliament, this entire portion of Ireland, with those numerous towns, may be said to be unrepresented; for county members seem

* Among these may be mentioned, Leitrim, Carrick, Boyle, Jamestown, Drumsna, Ruskey, Elphin, Longford, Killashee, Ballymahon, Moate, Roscommon, Strokestown, Athlone, Shannon-bridge, Ballinasloe, Tuam, Eyre-Court, Portumna, Loughrea, Woodford, Mount Shannon, Scariff, Tully-graney, Gort, Bannagher, Parsonstown, Borrisokane, Nenagh, Killaloe, O'Brien's-bridge, Castle-Connell, Limerick, Adaire, Rathkeale, Newcastle, Askeaton, Abbeyfeale, Glinn, Tarbert, Listowell, Ballylongford, Newmarket, Six-mile-bridge, Clare, Ennis, Kilrush, &c.

to have no eye to *local wants*. Had those towns been situated on the Eastern coast, and opposite to England, they would not, doubtless, have remained so unheeded. The interior and West of Ireland has truly been neglected, and the present generation is suffering under the consequences.*

On this head, the speech of the Honourable Member for Kilkenny, N. P. Leader, Esq. in the debate on the Reform

* “Were I called on,” observed Mr. Leader, “to mark the track of desolation and almost of famine in Ireland—were I required to point to the district where anarchy is most prevalent, and the blessings of prosperity are least known, I would fearlessly proceed to the part of Ireland where there is nearly no representation, and demonstrate that the most frequent tumultuous insurrections of the people, and the most appalling poverty have long existed, and now continue to rage, in those districts where the people have been and are now inadequately represented. Sir, it is matter deserving the most serious reflection of those (and, oh ! how few are they !) who sit down to study the state and condition of Ireland with the view to its improvement, that one half of Ireland should have the power of transmitting to the Legislature a knowledge of every measure calculated to advance its interest, whilst nearly the other half should be bereft of this inestimable benefit. Let me suppose a line drawn from Londonderry, and passing near Athlone, through the city of Limerick to Cape Clear, to be a line of demarcation between the fairly represented and inadequately represented portions of Ireland ; and then let me be permitted to draw the attention of the House to the large tract of country and of sea-coast to the West of that line. Sir, on the North and Southwest of that line there is an indented coast of 1700 miles, with a population of 2,000,000 of inhabitants. That line passes through the counties of Donegal, Mayo, Sligo, Galway, Clare, Kerry, and Cork,—counties remarkable for their size, as well as the number of their inhabitants. *I contend, that this great district is imperfectly connected with all the valuable institutions of the empire ; and that an extension of the representative system into that district is as necessary as an alteration or renovation of the franchise in any other part of the empire.*”

“Sir, I have contended for a just and fair settlement, for which purpose representation should be fairly spread over the surface of Ireland. Let it be recollected, that for the 150 towns which Morgan has collected in his Statistic Tables, there are only eleven of these towns in the interior of Ireland which return representatives to this House. The state of the representation stands thus :—*sixty-four county Members, twenty-five Members representing towns and cities on the coast, and only eleven Members representing towns and cities in the interior of Ireland.*”

Bill, on the 24th of March, is strikingly illustrative of the mischievous want of Parliamentary influence under which the Western half of Ireland has at all times laboured.

Will then the Government and the Legislature continue negligent, or inactive, while the want of employment and the rising spirit of turbulence, so clearly points to the coming danger?

Will they, like the countryman in the fable, stand by till the stream has passed? Will they remain but lookers-on, until the stream of events, which increases with terrific influence, shall overwhelm the land? They must lay their shoulders to the wheel. Let them enquire if the facts here stated be correct or the inferences just:—*but let them act.*

Ireland is not to be pacified or improved by political measures alone. The labourer's hands must be employed, and the fruit of that labour brought to market. Take the example of England. See how she has increased in wealth and resources, in population and the *means of intercourse*, even in despite of politics, and let us follow in her track.

Were we here discussing the probable consequences of any untried speculation, or urging some ingenious but doubtful theory; the misgivings of caution, or even the wisdom of delay, would have been justifiable: but when the question at issue (and which is within the comprehension of the meanest rustic) is, the value of intercourse to an agricultural or trading community, there seems to be no excuse for ages of neglect or further delay.

Let the Government look but to the present *expence* of maintaining the peace by extraordinary means: their special commissions; their military array; and additional constabulary force. Another special commission at a heavy expence, has, it appears, been just issued for *Limerick, Clare, Galway, and Roscommon*. A proclamation, also, placing certain baronies of Galway, Limerick, and *Tipperary*, under the peace preservation Act.

Here are no less than five counties out of the ten connected

with the Shannon, under severe visitations for their lawless proceedings ; yet the great causing power of these proceedings is the want of employment, and remuneration for their labour.

It is not only remarkable, but quite to the point of these observations, that the *first name* on the list of proscribed baronies, the hitherto peaceable barony of Leitrim, in the county of Galway, should be one which, last session, presented a petition to Parliament, the phraseology of which attracted some attention at the time. The petitioners stated that “ though nearly surrounded by *a river called the Shannon*, they had not the advantage of a single road leading “ to it, or any access to the navigation.” The petitioners further stated the fact, that the barony had always been peaceable, and never disturbed by illegal meetings or violence ; and they prayed Parliament to order roads to be made, &c. See what a single year has brought about.

This was in 1829 or 1830 ; and now, in 1831, they stand foremost on the proscribed list. The town of Woodford is in this barony, and has lately been the scene of so great violence, that a body of troops were despatched with expedition from the dépôt of Athlone, to protect the peaceable inhabitants.*

It may be stated that many of the disturbed districts have

* The following is extracted from a Dublin paper, of May 12th.

SPECIAL COMMISSION.

This day a Special Commission was issued to Judges Moore and Jebb, to proceed into the Counties of Limerick, Clare, Galway, and Roscommon, to try the prisoners who are at present in the Jails of these Counties, accused of breaches of the peace, under the “ Terry Alt” system.

The Commission will be opened in Limerick on the 30th of May, and in Clare on the 2d June, each day at ten o’clock—the time for the other two Counties not yet fixed.

It will be seen by the following Proclamation, that the County of Clare and several Baronies in Galway, Limerick, and Tipperary, are placed under the protection of the Peace Preservation Act.

not the plea of want to justify their violence; but if this were the place, that could easily be explained: it may, however, be stated, that even in the districts where plenty appears to abound, there is yet a vast population but half employed, and the land but half cultivated; and that if they are less distressed than their neighbours, it is more attributable to the great productiveness of their soils, than to the industry or

By the Lord Lieutenant and Council of Ireland.

A PROCLAMATION.

ANGLESEY,

Whereas, by an act passed in the 54th year of the reign of his late Majesty, George the Third, intituled, "An Act to provide for the better execution of the laws in Ireland, by appointing superintending magistrates and additional constables in counties, in certain cases," it is amongst other things enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for the Lord Lieutenant, or other chief governor or governors of Ireland, for the time being, by and with the advice of the privy council of Ireland, to declare, by proclamation, that any county, county of a city, or county of a town in Ireland, or any barony, or baronies, or half barony or half baronies in any county at large, to be therein specified, is or are in a state of disturbance, and requires or require an extraordinary establishment of police.

And whereas, it hath sufficiently appeared to us, that the county of Clare; the baronies of Leitrim, Loughrea, Athenry, Clonmacowen, Longford, Killconnell, Killyan, Ballymoe, and Kiltartan, in the county of Galway; the baronies of Moycarne and Athlone, in the county of Roscommon; and the baronies of Upper Ormond and Lower Ormond, in the county of Tipperary, are in a state of disturbance, and require extraordinary establishments of Police.

Now we, the Lord Lieutenant, by and with the advice of his Majesty's Privy Council, by virtue of the said act, and the powers thereby vested in us, do by this our proclamation, declare that the said county of Clare; the baronies of *Leitrim*, Loughrea, Athenry, Clonmacowen, Longford, Killconnell, Killyan, Ballymoe, and Kiltartan in the county of Galway; the baronies of Moycarne, and Athlone, in the county of Roscommon; and the baronies of Upper Ormond and Lower Ormond, in the county of Tipperary, are in a state of disturbance and require extraordinary establishments of Police.

Given at the Council Chamber in Dublin, the 10th day of May, 1831.

Plunket, C. Guillamore. Charles Bushe, William M'Mahon. John Radcliff. H. Joy. F. Blacburne. E. G. Stanley.

God save the King.

labour expended on them. Besides, where the great body of a county is labouring under the disease of stagnant labour, it is not to be expected that the few favoured spots will escape the contagion, or be able to resist the temptation or threats of the remainder.

It is a melancholy fact, that the towns and districts, with the names of which the public eye has lately been familiarized as the scenes of outrage or distress, are, almost without exception, those which are directly connected with the subject before us; and that those names mark at once the line of disturbance and the line of the Shannon.

Let, then, this river be regarded in its great features—bisecting the island, and running, with unprofitable splendour, its course of 200 miles through the heart of the country, and through its most disturbed parts. With an immense population within reach of its ameliorating influence; a population, young in civilization and social habits, ignorant, uneducated, unemployed, and dissatisfied.

Let it be asked, is it consistent with common sense to doubt the effect of interchange and intercourse? Is it reasonable to suppose that such a river, were its resources developed, could fail of giving value to the labour of the population, and of turning the weakness, the divisions, and the wants of that population into strength, unity, and prosperity?

It is not here intended to be urged, that increasing the roads and navigations of Ireland will at once restore peace and ensure employment. No;—but it is meant to be pressed that without additional intercourse, by which labour may have a value, and industry a reward, all other measures for improving the condition of the population must fail.

SECTION III.

Of the Remedies, and particularly of Grants in Aid of Public Works.

IN considering the remedies applicable to the condition of Ireland, it is important to consider how we may avoid the failures which attended former plans of relief; and how a more useful direction may be given to future aids in the promotion of works of public utility.

The granting public money in aid of public works, has long been a recognized principle both in England and Ireland. In the year 1703, it appears a committee was appointed in the Irish Parliament to prepare heads of a Bill for making the river Shannon navigable from Limerick to the County of Leitrim. Several Acts were subsequently passed for promoting inland navigation in Ireland, and in 1715 a general measure was established by Act of Parliament for works of that description. The title of the Act was in these remarkable words—“An Act to encourage the draining and improving the bogs and unprofitable low grounds, and *for easing and despatching the inland carriage and conveyance of goods from the one part to another within this kingdom.*”

It is thus remarkable that Ireland took the lead in devising modes of improving inland navigation; as, at that period, and until long after, there was not a single canal in England.

In an Act passed in Ireland in 1729 it is stated, that, as the commissioners named under the former Act had only powers to contract with undertakers for carrying on works *at their own expence*, the great charge has discouraged private persons, and “where *encouraging tillage and employing the poor* will be of great benefit: and it is reasonable and “fit that *works of public benefit* should be carried on at the

“charge of the kingdom by some public fund,” &c. &c. Certain duties were imposed, and specific grants made, from time to time, in promotion of inland navigation up to the year 1800, when a sum of £500,000. was granted for that and other purposes.

Considering the objects which Government have in view in recommending grants in aid of public works, a few leading principles to direct the judgment in their appropriation may not be ill-timed.

This subject may be considered under two heads; the *description of works* which it is desirable to promote by loans, and the *conditions* under which such loans should be made.

With respect to the first; the utility or expediency of any work, however great, should not, *per se*, be sufficient to justify any expenditure. The relation which the *utility or expediency* may bear to the *amount* of the proposed expenditure, and the *extent of district or population* to be benefited, is an essential ingredient in the propriety of any grant or loan.

These considerations are not more important in the *distribution* of the proposed funds, than in the *construction* of the *powers* under which those funds shall be distributed. Were it possible to satisfy *all* claims for loans and improvements, these distinctions would be unnecessary: but, the question is, *what is the greatest quantum of public good which may be effected, by the smallest expenditure of public money?*

To the neglect of these few considerations in the distribution of the enormous funds levied under grand jury assessments, is in a great measure attributable, the anomalous state of things which exists in Ireland at present. After an expenditure on roads and public works, equivalent, at the time of the Union, to £470,000. annually, and augmented to the sum of £800,000. at the present, we yet find districts the most embellished with roads still receiving an annual outlay to a great amount; while those adjoining, some of them

from 100 to 200 square miles in extent, are wholly neglected; without even leading lines of communication through them, and though densely peopled, shut out from the practicability of any profitable trading intercourse with the neighbouring towns and markets.*

Of the second head, *the conditions* on which advances shall be made from the Treasury, the report of the committee of last year, quotes a former report of 1823 as follows.

“ The principle upon which it appears expedient to employ “ funds which Parliament may grant for carrying on public “ works in Ireland, is, to make such grants dependant on “ sums raised locally by grand juries, or local commissioners; “ *by loans advanced on sufficient security, and re-payable “ at fixed periods;* and this principle the committee consi-“ “ considers may be safely extended to all extensive and per-“ manent public works erected under the authority of grand “ juries, *where the security for re-payment is certain.”*”

The committee of 1830 recommends, as we have seen, “ A Bill for the extension of public works, whether roads, “ bridges, canals, piers, harbours, or railways in Ireland,

* Mr. Nimmo states, in 1823, that the fertile plains of Limerick, Cork, and Kerry, are separated from each other by a deserted country, hitherto nearly an impassable barrier between them. This large district comprehends nearly 600 Irish, or 960 square miles British. In many places it is very populous. As might be expected, under such circumstances, the people are turbulent, and their houses being almost inaccessible for want of roads, it is not surprising that, during the disturbances in 1821 and 1822, this district was the asylum for Whiteboys, smugglers, and robbers, and that stolen cattle were drawn into it as a safe and impenetrable retreat. Notwithstanding its present desolate state, this country contains within itself the seeds of future improvement and industry.

Mr. Griffiths, an eminent engineer, subsequently reported on the same district, and observed,—“ At the commencement of the works, the people “ flocked into them seeking employment, *at any rate*: their looks haggard; “ their clothing wretched; they rarely possessed any tools or implements “ beyond an ill-shaped spade.” After the execution of the new roads and works in the year 1829, he described the whole face of the country as improved, and “ exhibiting a scene of industry and exertion, at once pleasing “ and remarkable.”

“ placing the direction of such works under a fixed superintendence and control ; and advances being made from the treasury upon *public security of an unquestionable character.*”

Now the objection to all this is, that the leading consideration appears to be the *safe and profitable employment*, as well as the *repayment* of the money.

The whole body of the evidence, however, leads to the conclusion, that re-payment of the principal, in numberless instances, would be a consideration of the utmost insignificance, when balanced against the general benefits which it is admitted would invariably and almost immediately follow ; and which the committee itself considers as “ evidence “ most satisfactory and conclusive” on the policy of national advances.

In quoting from Mr. Telford’s evidence on the operations of the commissioners for highland roads and bridges, the committee conclude with this all-comprehensive summary of that eminent engineer and practical man. “ The moral ha-“ bits of the great mass of the working class are changed. “ They see they can depend on their own exertions for sup-“ port. This goes on silently, and is scarcely perceived until “ apparent by their results. I consider these improvements “ *one of the greatest blessings ever conferred upon any coun-“ try.* About £200,000. has been expended in fifteen years. “ *It has been the means of advancing the country at least “ 100 years.*”

The application of the principle is admitted by the committee to be infinitely more conclusive *as regards Ireland.* The recorded opinions of Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Kilally, Mr. Mullins, and other civil engineers, and well-informed persons are equally conclusive.

Several instances may be quoted from the report as illustrative of the great *moral*, as contradistinguished from the *money* value of expenditure by Government in creating the means of intercourse. In the course of seven years, Mr.

Nimmo expended £167,430. of public money on the western side of Connaught. He executed above 80 different works—made above 300 miles of road, with several sea-coast harbours, and above 100 bridges ; the effect of which was, as given in the evidence, and taken from the Parliament returns, that *the annual increase of the revenue, in the seven years, was equal to the whole amount of the expenditure.*

The evidence of Mr. Barrington, crown solicitor, as to the better administration of justice, from the facilities afforded by increased communications through the country, is alone sufficient to induce a liberal expenditure of public money.*

The committee, indeed, have themselves come to this sound conclusion, “*that the effects produced by public works appear to have been—extended cultivation, improved habits*

* Mr. Kelly observes, “at Abbeyfeale and Brosna, above half the congregation at mass, on Sundays, were barefoot and ragged, with small straw hats of their own manufacture—felt hats being only worn by a few. Hundreds, and even thousands of men could be got to work at sixpence a day, if it had been offered. The condition of the people is now very different; the congregations at the chapels are now as well clad as in other parts; the demand for labour is increased, and a spirit of industry is getting forward, *since the new roads have become available.*”

Speaking of a district opened by Mr. Nimmo, in 1824, he observes—“a few years ago there was hardly a plough, car, or carriage of any kind ; Butter, the only produce, was carried to Cork on horseback. There was not one decent public house, and I think only one house slated or plastered in the village : *the nearest post-office 30 miles distant.* Since the new road was made, there were built in three years upwards of 20 respectable two-story houses, slated and plastered, with good sash windows. A respectable shop, with cloth, hardware, and groceries ; a comfortable inn ; a post-office, bridewell, and new chapel, a quay, covered with lime-stone for manure, a salt-work, two stores for purchasing oats, and a considerable traffic in linen and yarn.”

The report states a most important result from the opening a line of communication. “In the district surrounding Clifden in the county of Galway, no revenue was paid to the state prior to 1822. In 1826, taxation to the amount of £2,500. was collected ; and in 1828 it had augmented to £6080. 7s. 3d., marking a consumption of spirits, tobacco, tea, sugar, pepper, butter, glass, timber, and other articles, and thus proving indisputably the improved habits of the people.”

“ of industry, a better administration of justice, the re-establishment of peace and tranquillity in the disturbed districts, a domestic colonization of a population in excess in certain districts, a diminution of illicit distillation, and a very considerable increase of revenue.”

This summary is as just as it is comprehensive and convincing. What more could the most rigid economist require? Yet, with all this evidence before the committee, they recommend making advances on terms that would most likely suppress all applications, if made with the *bond fide* expectation of their being answered; and look for securities which are not available.

The British Parliament will no doubt rail at the committee, and call on them to look to their securities. Is it then a jew's bargain that is to be struck with the denuded condition of Ireland? Is the ameliorated condition of a whole population nothing? Is the increase of civilization and social habits nothing? Is the more easy execution of the laws, and the moral elevation of society nothing? Is the septennial increase of the revenue to the amount of the expenditure nothing? Is the *money consideration*—the repayment of principal and interest, to be the *primum mobile*?

This is not the way to deal with Ireland. The offer of millions on this “unquestionable security” would effect nothing. It would not be asked for; or, if so, not for works of the description required by an unopened country, almost in a state of nature; wanting the elements of trading intercourse, and all that gives value to labour and industry. And what, after all, is the making advances by Government for such purposes, but the casting the seed into the soil, the harvest of which, though gathered in by Irishmen, returns fourfold to the British revenue, and even to British manufacturers.

The committee, in reporting on the conditions on which advances of public money should be made, felt they had to contend with the prejudices of Englishmen, and pass the

ordeal of the severe, yet often inconsiderate economy of the House of Commons. Did Englishmen, however, not as mere money-lenders, but as legislators, see rightly, they would be the first to recommend liberality in this respect. Let them but consider the millions that are extracted from Irish land and Irish labour, to be expended in England ; and on the score of justice as well as policy, they will not refuse these grants, and which only qualify the country to become increased consumers of the fruit of British labour. Let them ask themselves, what is the improvement of *Irish agriculture* but improving the *home market for their own manufactures* ; every shilling paid for Irish produce being returned in exchange for British labour. Can the same be said of the produce of the lands of Russia, Prussia, or Poland ?

Looking, then, at the wants of Ireland, and the impossibility of those wants being supplied by any other than Parliamentary powers and means*—looking to the necessity under

* It is remarkable, that in the instructions for the council of trade, “ given at His Majesty’s castle of Dublin, 16th May, 1664,” we find the same wants calling out for investigation and remedies as in 1831. Their applicability to the state of Ireland at the present day is not a little curious.

“ INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF TRADE.

“ ORMONDE,

“ *First you are to take into your consideration all the native commodities of the growth and production of this, His Majesty’s Kingdom of Ireland, and how they may be ordered, nourished, increased and manufactured to the Employments of His Majesty’s people, and to the best advantage of the public ; and to consider by what way any of the manufactures in the said Kingdom are corrupted, debased and disparaged, and by what probable means they may be restored and maintained in their antient goodness and reputation.*

2. “ You are to consider whether, in the said Kingdom of Ireland, the importation of foreign commodities doth not overbalance the exportation of such as are native, and how to advise and propound the most effectual means, that in the said Kingdom the importations may not exceed the exportations.

3. “ You are to consider how a manufacture of linen cloth and linen yarn may be advanced and settled in this Kingdom with most advantage to His Majesty and his people.

which England is placed of improving, for her own sake, and quickly too, the moral condition of Ireland—looking at the increase of revenue, which as invariably flows from such improvements as light and heat from the sun's rays, one cannot understand the policy of that triple state usury, which, not satisfied with an ample equivalent in the improved condition of the people, and the more than commensurate in-

4. " You are to consider by what means the Fishing trade may be most improved in the said Kingdom of Ireland.

5. " You are to consider of all other matters relating to Navigation, and " the increase and security thereof.

6. " You are to consider by what particular means Bullion may be best drawn into Ireland from the countries of foreign princes.

7. " You are to consider what advantages for the trade of His Majesty's liege people are provided for by His Majesty's leagues with any of his confederates and allies, and to advise and propound from time to time what is expedient for His Majesty, by his Ministers in foreign parts, or otherwise to take care that His Majesty's subjects may (as Justice requires) reap the benefit intended to them by such leagues in relation to their trade in Foreign parts.

8. " You are to consider how there may be that equal distribution of trade and manufacture in this Kingdom, which will most conduce to the general good of His Majesty's loving subjects therein.

9. " You are to consider how convenient and practicable any thing propounded to you may be concerning new inventions and improvements in any art, trade, or manufacture, and thereof, as occasion may be, to make report unto Us, the Lord Lieutenant, or other Chief Governors or Governors of this Kingdom and Council.

10. " You are to consider by what means sturdy vagrants and beggars may be compelled to earn their living by some lawful calling.

11. " You are to consider by what ways and means commerce may be promoted, by the employment of some persons in the mending Highways and Bridges, and making Rivers navigable, and in draining bogs and loghs, and recovering land from the Sea.

12. " You are diligently to enquire into the abuses of weights and measures practised throughout the said Kingdom, and to consider how the same may be effectually remedied.*

13. " You are to consider how correspondencies may be settled in all places of great commerce abroad, that it may be better known with what profit or loss the native commodities of this Kingdom are there

* " This was effected in 1826, just 162 years from the date of these was instructions

crease of the revenue, expects the *money return* also, and that even with interest.

Let any man examine with his own eyes, and with the picture of Ireland as it is before him, and say if it be not wise, and even necessary, to continue the system commenced by

“ vented, and what Laws are made, and trades new-erected there to the advantage of the trade of His Majesty’s Subjects of this Kingdom.

14. “ You are faithfully and with speed to deliver your opinions in writing, and so to make reports thereof to Us, the Lord Lieutenant or other Chief Governor or Governors of this Kingdom, and Council, concerning the premises ; as likewise concerning such other matters as shall be occasionally at any time referred to your consideration.

“ Given at His Majesty’s Castle of Dublin, 16th May, 1664.

“ *First Meeting, May 26, 1664.*

“ Present—Lord Primate, &c. and several Chief Lawyers and other Gentlemen, and principal Merchants, *who, after reading the Commission and Instructions, chose Committees to prepare business, appointed time and place for the weekly meeting, and adjourned.*

“ *And so continued their constant weekly meetings for several years in debate of these general heads of instruction and their branches ; and, after the greatest deliberation, sometimes two or three months upon one Instruction, agreed and resolved several of them into Reports to the Council Board.*”

To these official documents may be added the following observations from the anonymous pamphlet from which this extract is taken.

“ These extracts afford a pretty accurate description of the *mode* in which Irish business is transacted *at the present day*, and justify the charge of negligence or apathy. It took not less than 162 years to give effect to one single item of those 14 heads !!! And the greater part of the remainder continue to be the subjects for Petition and discussion to the present hour, notwithstanding the numerous Parliamentary Commissions and Committees, established, at great expence, to enquire into the state of Ireland since the Union. I am almost disposed to think that the habits of the Council of Trade, in 1664, are part of ‘ Ireland’s inheritance,’ and that all which Councils, Commissions, or Committees can do for her, is limited, by some hidden spell over the country, to *meeting and debating* ; for what, let me ask, are the fruits of the enquiries and deliberations of the Committees of 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1830 ? Have even the Duke of Ormonde’s Instructions been fulfilled ? How much misery would have been saved to Ireland, and how much treasure to the Empire, if they had been attended to ? In May, 1664, he pointed at the diseases ; in 1831 we can only *hope* that remedies will be hereafter applied.”

the Irish Parliament, and make grants for certain works without any regard to any other re-payment, than what arises from improved habits, increasing industry, and the new capabilities of trade which they create.

Among the 19 remedial measures enumerated in the report, the committee having recommended “advances from the “Treasury, upon public security of unquestionable character,” let us now consider in detail, what descriptions of security are available in Ireland for the contemplated purpose; for to legislate with reference to others, which are not to be met with or offered, would be worse than illusory. It would be dangerous, as it could only lead to hopes deferred and disappointment.

Where securities and repayment of interest or principal are advisable, advances may be made on the following classes of securities, either singly or combined, as the case may be:

1. On rates, tolls, or dues *existing*, and *adequate* for re-payment.
2. On rates, &c., though not immediately adequate, yet prospectively so.
3. On rates or harbour-dues levyable on tonnage in seaports.
4. On rates, &c. prospective, and *to be created by the act and on the projected work*.
5. On the rents and issues of leasehold property.
6. On mortgage of chattel property, stores, houses, barges, and floating property.
7. On personal security for *interest alone*, collateral with mortgage of chattel property.
8. On personal security, (for *small sums*) for interest alone, payable in the shape of rent.
9. On grand jury presentments, repayable with or without interest.
10. On mortgage of land to be reclaimed by drainage or embankment.

These involve all the classes of securities which are avail-

able, and are each applicable to peculiar description of works of public utility. No *real* property exists in Ireland available as a security for public works. In fact, no individuals or body having available *real* property, would encumber it for *public* purposes, or expose themselves to the claims of the worst species of creditor, namely, the public.

As claims may be made for advances from £100. to £100,000., and on every description of security, according to the nature of the undertaking, this circumstance alone is sufficient to indicate the necessity of classification. A few observations on this head may be of service.

The first distinction that should be drawn is between *small* and *large loans*. Loans under £500. or £1000.; and all those above that sum.

The execution of large works, as the creation or improvement of coast harbours ;—the intersecting large districts with roads and bridges ;—the pushing new lines of navigation into the interior ;—the draining or embanking extensive tracts. Such works are of unquestionable utility. Government can scarcely be too liberal in their encouragement. If they do not present “unquestionable security” for the *money consideration*, they give a return of a far more beneficial and *permanent* character ; and which, in the eye of the statesman, or even the financier, will not be under-rated—the improved condition of the people, and the continuing increased demand for labour.

There is, however, a more unpretending, yet more extensively useful class of works which has been too much overlooked, although, *relatively with the outlay*, they are infinitely more beneficial, and productive of more permanent results. Under these may be classed small inland piers, docks, quays, bridges, and general improvements of existing navigations and towns. Works of this description give effect to all *local capabilities*. In England these are supplied by local individual or joint capital ; but in Ireland, if left to such sources, they must long remain unaided and unexplored. Loans under

£500. and even down to £100. in the prosecution of such improvements, are, relatively, more useful than advances for more costly undertakings.

The mode of bringing this class of loans within the powers of an Act of Parliament is of simple construction, but is foreign to the objects before us.

Small loans, then, from £100. to £500. for distinct works, should be freely made on personal security; or on existing or prospectively created rates or tolls, and let on lease for terms of years, with the payment of interest in the shape of rent, to cease either at the expiration of the term or when paid off.

This class of small loans may be extended to sums of £1000. where the applicants or lessees expend *bona fide* of *their own capital*, in a given proportion to the loan.

Large loans may be made on the security of existing or prospective tolls or dues, and it may here be observed, that where a condition of re-payment of the principal is required, no instalment of the same should be demanded until after a given time from the completion or occupation of the work.

Power should also be given for granting loans of the class above £1000. on personal security, collateral with that of rents, issues and profits, or mortgage of chattel property.

Public lines of road of unquestionable necessity, in opening up districts, or leading to towns, navigable rivers, or canals, should be made by grants at the public expense, and without any contemplated return; or at most, on the security of grand juries, for payment of a moderate rate of *interest*, the same to cease after a few years:—the improvement of the country and the condition of the population being the most desirable equivalent. *Grand juries, in such cases, should be bound to maintain the same in permanent repair.**

* This is a condition of the utmost importance, as without it, grand juries, being a fluctuating body, soon fall into their former neglect, and the roads become comparatively useless. It is said the Marquis of Angle-

The great disease of Ireland being the want of employment, and of internal intercourse, every thing tending to supply this important desideratum should be encouraged with no niggard hand.

A distinction should also be drawn between works of prime necessity, and those of secondary importance. In the words of the Report, the works to be encouraged should be those “whose good effects are not limited to the period of their execution, but which *develop and encourage new industry, creating an active demand for labour even after their termination.*”

These considerations are of paramount importance, although hitherto neglected in Ireland as an influencing principle. Caution, indeed, in this respect, is more essential, inasmuch as the suggestions, recommendations, and general advocacy of new works necessarily originate with professional men, and who, in the nature of things, must be expected to give the preference to such works as involve professional fame and character, and large expenditure.

When an outlay of £50,000. is involved, there is abundance of advocacy and proportionate exertion. Whereas, a work, however useful or necessary, if requiring an outlay of but £500. has few patrons;—few to interest themselves in the nursing and rearing a bantling of so little promise; and nothing is done; or if executed, the work falls into inferior hands; is ill done; and perhaps unmercifully jobbed.

Professional men are among the most valuable members of the community. They are the great aids towards improvement, and never was England more indebted to them than of late years for her public buildings, harbours, docks, canals, bridges, aqueducts, and, last of all, her rail-roads. But pro-

sea, in his late tour through Connaught, felt forcibly the want of this compulsory condition for repair. The best roads, particularly those over bogs, and subject to mountain floods, if left for a few years without attention, not only get into bad condition, but require heavy repairs for what might have been done at a comparatively trifling cost.

fessional men are not the most likely, nor is it reasonable to expect they should be most forward to suggest or encourage useful or necessary works, *if involving small expenditures*; and in which not unfrequently, the professional labour and attention is more than the work could possibly compensate.

In considering what should be done to render the proposed grant practically valuable, it should not be forgotten that, while we have freely expended hundreds of thousands on navigations in America, it has taken ten years to disburse the last Parliamentary grant in Ireland, and of which, from the conditions imposed, but little went to the great desideratum—the increasing the means of intercourse and employing the population: the last appropriation; the balance, of £18,000., being only in the present year in a course of expenditure. Yet, during the last 30 years, there has existed a board expressly appointed for the *promotion of inland navigation in Ireland*.

In all former grants of public money in aid of public works, the great intervals that have occurred between such grants being made, and their being taken up, proves that there existed some great error in the terms on which loans were to be made.

Where an interval of ten years occurs between a grant by Parliament and its appropriation, such a grant loses the effect intended. The object of Parliament in making the present proposed grant in aid of works is, that it shall be employed, or that it shall not. If the latter, it is deceitful; if otherwise, then let the measure be available and practicable.

On the operations of that Board of Inland Navigation during the 30 years which they have been in existence, perhaps unmerited censure has been bestowed:—their constitution was originally defective. It cannot be set down as a matter of reproach to that Board, that so little has been done, where so much was wanting—seeing that the very sinews of their efficiency were denied, and the grants in aid of inland

navigation were doled out, and annually pared down until they barely covered the expences of the establishment: and while the works under their special jurisdiction were falling into decay, from the mere want of immediate reparation, *and which is the case to the present hour.*

Shall we then condemn the Board for this mockery of Parliamentary encouragement of inland intercourse, and on which so mainly hung the industry and even peace of the country? The system was not theirs. They were but the instruments, ready and anxious to be efficient, and doubtless conscious of the total inapplicability of the system under which they worked. Such a Board, during thirty years, might, if otherwise constituted, have become the useful depositaries of information, touching the localities of every county in Ireland; and thus have been as a great light to the Legislature to have pointed to the weakness and nakedness of the land. It should have marked the progress of England with her 5000 miles of navigation, and have annually drawn the attention of the Legislature and the nation to the want of intercourse in Ireland, which so ruinously remained stationary, while the want of it increased with the increasing population.

It is censure enough on the Irish system of promoting inland navigation, to say, with Mr. Nimmo, that on the broad waters of the Shannon, occupying a length of 60 miles, "*there was not a single landing-place;*" and that there were *no quays or roads to the water at any part of the Shannon except at the few bridges.*"*

The error in the constitution of that Board was, the want

* A fact may here be stated, illustrative of the neglect which this navigation, and the great districts on it, have laboured under from former Irish Governments. The navigation between Killaloe and Limerick having fallen into the hands of Government, and being placed under the Directors General of Inland Navigation, a dispute arose as to the condition of the navigation when delivered up to them, and after a heavy expenditure of public money. The directors-general of that day, and for the purpose of bringing the dispute to an issue, took an Irish way of accomplishing this purpose. They actually *placed a barrier across the navigation*

of an active principle which would direct their course in the exploring the wants, and searching out the means of being useful. They were the mere passive agents, to follow the views of the ever-changing Government of Ireland. Had they been endowed with the principles of discovering and developing the great resources of the country, we should not, at this time of day, be told that those resources were unexplored, unprofitable, and unknown.

Let, then, the Government enquire if the foregoing statements be fact, or the inferences correct. Let them turn their thoughts to the future; much valuable time has been lost, and the consequences daily developed in the accumulating distresses of the country. But it is not too late to act. The entire canals of England are the work of 70 years; yet suppose the extent of inland intercourse in England reduced to that of Ireland—that her 5000 miles of intercourse were reduced to 500, while her population remained at at present. It is unnecessary to dwell on the consequences.

Surveying the whole of these observations, can we draw any other conclusion, than that great neglect and supineness towards inland intercourse has marked the character of the successive Governments of Ireland?

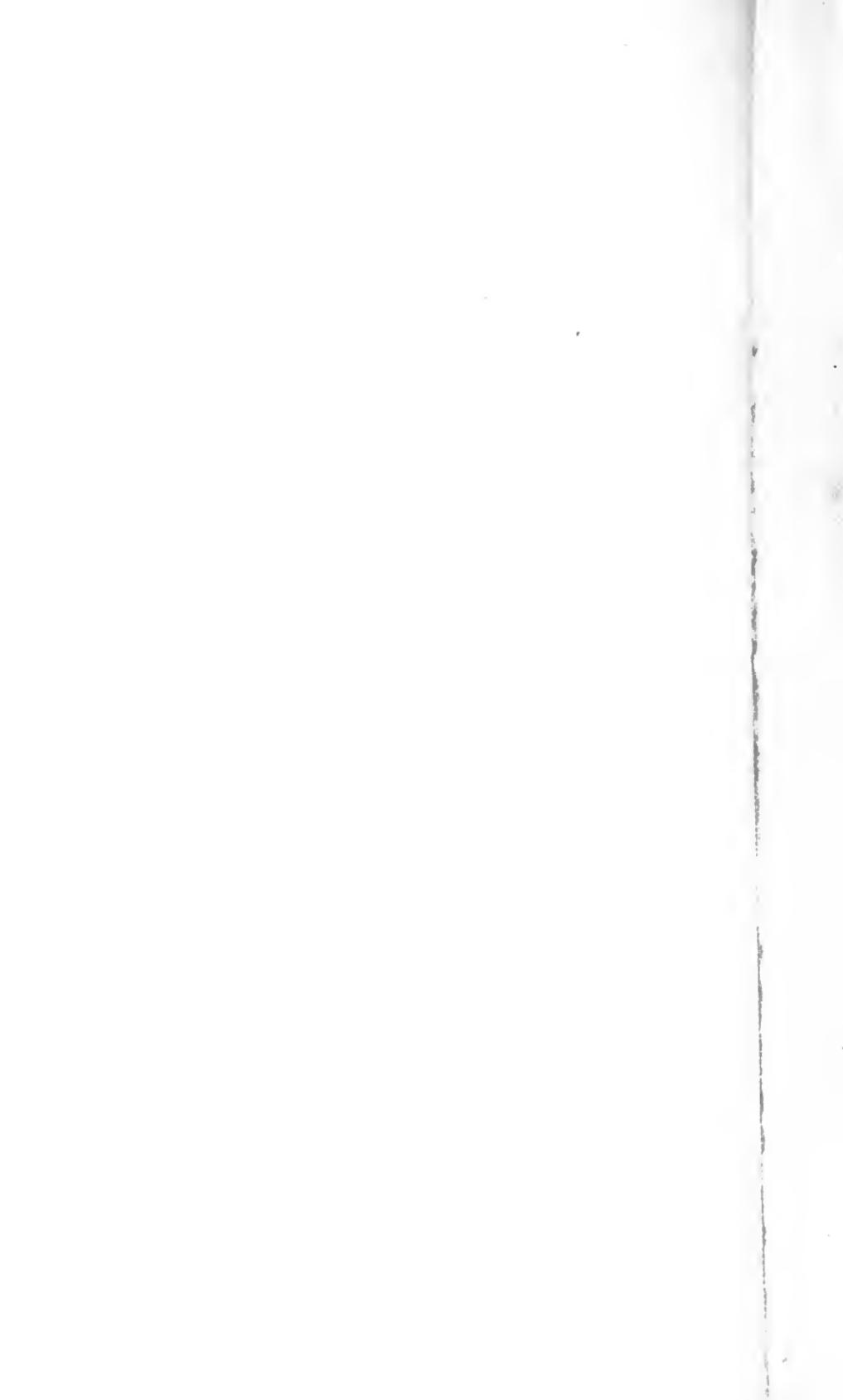
In these strange times, however, when the master spirit of reform is abroad, let us hope its genius may infuse wisdom into our councils, and give efficiency to their remedies. Let us invoke that spirit, and implore the powers that be, to extend their cares to this distant member of the empire; and

and shut it up for years. Sir Robert Peel, then secretary for Ireland, having at length become acquainted with the fact, expressed his disapprobation in such strong terms as to occasion the resignation of the chairman of the Board. It may be asked, how could all this happen? Did the Company of the Grand Canal, whose intercourse with Limerick was thus closed, remonstrate? Did the landowners of the counties on the Shannon remonstrate? Did the representatives of those counties call for Parliamentary enquiry? No. Is it then a matter of surprise that this navigation should be unknown, and the millions of inhabitants almost within sight of its waters should be unemployed, in want, and dissatisfied.

let the “kingdom of Connaught” share a little of their patronage and protection. Let them remember, that, as in the physical, so in the political body, disease will not for ever confine itself to the extremities ; but, however insignificant may be the part affected, its taint and sufferings may one day undermine the strength, and ultimately destroy the constitution.







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